

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 007329

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP, CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ

SUBJECT: CODEL SOLARZ

REF: DAMASCUS 3041, DEC. 23, 1974

1. FOLLOWING RECEIPT REFTEL DEPTOFF CONVEYED TO CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ POSITION STATED TO YOU BY FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM, I.E. THAT CONGRESSMAN IS WELCOME TO COME TO SYRIA TO STUDY MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM AND BILATERAL US-SYRIAN RELATIONS BUT NOT TO LOOK INTO MATTERS CONCERNING SYRIAN JEWS. DEPTOFF TOLD CONGRESSMAN THAT IF HE DOES DECIDE TO GO TO SYRIA HE SHOULD NOT ASK OR EXPECT TO MEET WITH SYRIAN JEWS. CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT AND SAID HE WOULD HAVE TO CONSIDER WHETHER VISIT WORTHWHILE.

2. ON JANUARY 8 CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ INFORMED DEPTOFF THAT HE HAD DECIDED TO VISIT SYRIA AND THAT HIS TRIP TO AREA WOULD ALSO INCLUDE ISRAEL, JORDAN AND EGYPT. CONGRESSMAN ASKED IF HE MIGHT ASK IN HIS MEETINGS WITH SYRIAN OFFICIALS IF HE COULD MEET WITH SYRIAN JEWS. DEPTOFF SAID FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM HAD MADE VERY CLEAR THAT THIS WAS OUT; ADDED THAT ANY SUCH REQUEST WOULD VERY LIKELY AT MINIMUM BE MET WITH AN UNPLEASANT REBUFF. CONGRESSMAN SAID HE

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UNDERSTOOD AND DID NOT WANT TO CAUSE AN INCIDENT.DEPTOFF

SAID HE THOUGHT IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR CONGRESSMAN TO MENTION IN CONVERSATION WITH SYRIAN OFFICIALS, IN DISCREET LOW-KEY MANNER, HIS GENERAL CONCERN IN REGARD TO SYRIAN

JEWISH COMMUNITY. WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THIS.

3. UNLESS YOU SEE OVERRIDING OBJECTION, YOU SHOULD INFORM FOREIGN MINISTER THAT POSITION HE STATED TO YOU IN DECEMBER 22 CONVERSATION WAS PASSED ON TO CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ. CONGRESSMAN HAS NOW INFORMED US HE DESIRES VISIT SYRIA TO STUDY MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM AND BILATERAL US-SYRIAN RELATIONS. HE WOULD LIKE TO MEET WITH APPROPRIATE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, PARLIAMENTARIANS, AND ANYONE ELSE SARG THINKS APPROPRIATE. HE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN MAKING TRIP TO KUNEITRA IF SYRIANS THINK USEFUL. FYI: CONGRESSMAN WOULD BE INTERESTED ALSO IN TALKING TO ACADEMICIANS AND JOURNALISTS BUT REALIZES SARG MAY TAKE DIM VIEW OF THIS; LEAVE IT TO YOUR DISCRETION WHETHER TO PUT THIS TO KHADDAM. END FYI.

4. CONGRESSMAN PROPOSES ARRIVE DAMASCUS FROM CAIRO AT 6:55 P.M. FEBRUARY 10 ON EGYPTAIR AND DEPART DAMASCUS FOR AMMAN FEBRUARY 13 AT 2:20 P.M. VIA A KUWAIT AIR FLIGHT. IF THIS IS TOO MUCH TIME FOR ACTIVITIES SARG READY TO SCHEDULE, CONGRESSMAN WOULD CONSIDER ADDING SIDE TRIP TO LEBANON DURING THIS PERIOD.

5. WE ARE SENDING SEPARATE MESSAGE THROUGH REGULAR CHANNELS RE CONGRESSMAN'S TRAVEL TO ALL POSTS ON HIS ITINERARY. KISSINGER

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